



The King and the Dervish. p. 12.

PERSIAN STORIES:

ILLUSTRATIVE OF

EASTERN MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.

BY

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE public have kindly received the little book of Persian Fables, offered to them a year or two ago; thinking, perhaps, that some indulgence was due to their foreign origin. The consequence is, that this collection of little Stories is now intruded upon them; and if their good-nature leads them to be equally complacent upon this occasion, the Stories may look for some further claim upon their forbearance.

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PERSIAN STORIES

DEVOTION

ALI, the Commander of the Faithful, in the time that he was Caliph, used to pass all his days in settling the affairs of the people, and all his nights in devotion. His friends remonstrated with him against such constant exertion: and told him how wrong it was to take neither rest by day, nor repose by night. To which he replied:—"If I rest by day, my subjects will suffer loss; and if I sleep by night, I myself shall suffer in the day of judgment: and therefore I devote my days to the wants of the people, and my nights to the service of God."

AND there is a story told of one of the Princes of Herat, that he requested a man of eminent

piety to give him some short rule for his conduct. To which the holy man replied : “ If you wish for blessings in this life, and glory in the world to come, let your nights be passed as an humble suppliant before the throne of God ; and give up your days to dispensing justice, from your own throne, to the suppliants among your people.”

A CERTAIN Nobleman was in attendance at the court of one of the Caliphs ; and the time of prayer was close at hand : but the Caliph, being deeply engaged in some important business, forgot that it was the hour of prayer.

The Nobleman, however, arose, to perform his devotions ; upon which some one asked him, why he could not wait till the Caliph went to prayers. “ Because,” said he, “ the commands of God do not depend upon the will of another.” “ But the Caliph will be very angry with you.” To which he replied, “ If I can obtain the favour of God, I shall not fear the anger of man.”

The Caliph, who had overheard them, expressed his warm admiration of the Nobleman’s

DEVOTION.

sentiments, and ever after showed a sincere regard for him.

THANKSGIVING.

A KING was riding along, and a man in a patched garment, who stood by the way-side, greeted him in the usual form; but as the King was repeating something, he merely nodded his head, and gave no answer. The Dervise said, "O king! to offer a salutation is a holy custom, which is left to our discretion: but to return a salutation is a positive duty. I chose to follow a good custom: thou hast omitted a duty."

The King, from a sense of justice and religious feeling, reined in his horse, and began to make apologies to the poor man; telling him that he was engaged at the moment in thanksgiving, and so forgot to answer his salutation. "And to whom wast thou giving thanks?" said the Dervise. The King replied, "To God, the boundless benefactor; for all our enjoyments are His gift; and all that we possess is sent by Him; from the moon

to the glow-worm; from heaven to earth; each atom is overwhelmed by Him in bounty." The Dervise then asked him in what way he was giving thanks; and the King told him it was in the usual form of "Praise be to God, the Lord of all created things;" because those words conveyed his thanks for all that he enjoyed.

/ Upon which the Dervise thus addressed him:—"I perceive, O king! that thou art ignorant of the path of thanksgiving; and dost not follow the due course of setting forth thy gratitude. Thy thanks should be in the full measure of the Divine blessings, and should follow the course of infinite bounty. Thou hast attained to the height of prosperity, and days of glory overtake thee. It is not enough that for a moment thou chant a hymn of praise with the tongue, and no more. If thy thanksgiving as a prince is to be accepted in the presence of the King of kings—if thy gratitude shall ascend to bring down further blessings—then show forth the thanks that are more peculiarly due for each of the benefits bestowed upon thee."

The King then besought the Dervise to instruct

him more particularly in his duty, and the holy man continued in these words :—

“Thanks for sovereign power must be shown, in justice towards all classes of people, and in benevolence to all mankind; while a grateful sense of the possession of undisputed authority should teach thee to acknowledge the rights and services of those who bear allegiance to thee. If thou art thankful for great success and high prosperity, show the greater pity to those who are fallen into the dust of adversity, while the flourishing state of thy kingdom calls upon thee to make charitable provision for those who are in need. Art thou thankful for thy might and power? Then be kind and gentle to the helpless and the weak, and show thyself grateful for the enjoyment of health, by affording means of relief to all who are sick and afflicted. If thou wouldst praise God for thy brave and numerous armies, protect thy people from the violence of thy soldiers, and while enjoying thy palaces and gardens, show thyself thankful, by keeping the cottage of the peasant safe from the insolence of thy followers. In short, the sum of thanks-

giving is this: that, whether in anger or in pleasure; thou shouldst never deviate from what is just and right; and that in all things thou shouldst seek the repose of thy people, rather than thine own ease; no man can rest within thy dominions, while thou seekest nothing but thine own enjoyment."

The King felt the full value of the Dervise's words, and hastened to alight from his horse, that he might pay him the greater reverence; but when he looked for him, he was gone; and no one could tell which way he went. So he ordered the words to be written down, and strictly followed them as a rule of his conduct, through a long and prosperous reign.

RESIGNATION.

A KING once asked a learned man, on what the faithful might rely for divine aid under difficulties: and he told him chiefly upon two things; prayer and resignation. So the King

resolved to act upon these rules, and to make these two duties familiar to his mind.

On a sudden, a powerful enemy arose against him, and advanced, with a strong and numerous army, to attack him in his capital; upon which, collecting as many troops as he could, he went forth to meet the invaders.

When they were now within a short distance of each other, and it appeared that the event must depend upon the issue of a battle, the whole of that night, on the morrow of which they were to draw up in battle array, was passed by the King in fervent prayer. One of his generals besought him to take a little repose, to prepare him for the labours of the following day. To whom the King replied, "I will this night serve God; and do the work that is appointed me; the business of to-morrow is in His hands; let Him do whatsoever He will, I have neither any concern in it nor any power to choose." Then the general urged him to get his armour ready, and to prepare himself for the field, and for the conflict. But the King replied, "I am already clad in the armour of

RESIGNATION.

resignation, and have left all other matters to the goodness of God, in whom I have put my trust. I have committed my doings to Him who is the Lord in all His doings; let us see what His mercy will bring to pass."

At break of day, when the troops were set in array, and both armies were drawn up against each other, the help of the Lord was seen; and the host of divine aid came forth from hidden realms; for the moment that the troops of the enemy cast their eyes upon the canopy and banner of the King who had shown so much resignation, a sudden panic seized them, and before the battle had begun, or even a blow had been given, they took to flight.



GOOD FEELING.

THE highest degree of this sentiment is shown in not giving pain to those who come to ask favours, and the Caliph Màmùm is said to have afforded a bright example of it.

There was an Arab who had been brought up in the desert, and had never seen or tasted any but the brackish water of those sandy plains; and it so happened that there was a famine in his tribe, and he was compelled by hunger to leave the scenes of his youth, and wander from the home that he loved, in search of food.

When he had crossed the desert, and reached a cultivated part of the country, he met with a pond of rain-water, which was clean and free from weeds. As this was a new sight to him, he stood still some time in silent wonder; and when he had tasted the water, his astonishment was so great, that he believed a miracle had been wrought in his favour. After reflecting some time upon so singular an occurrence, and being persuaded that the water was given as the means of relieving his distress, he came to this resolution,—that such exquisite water was fit only for princes; that he would therefore carry some of it to the Caliph, who would no doubt be delighted with the taste, and give him such a reward as would amply supply the wants of his whole tribe. So he filled his leathern bottle with the water, and eagerly asking everybody he met, which was the way to Bagdad, pursued his road to the capital.

While he was yet some way off, the sound of the pomp of the royal retinue reached his ears, and he guessed that Màmùn was approaching. It was, in fact, the Caliph, who was going out

on a hunting expedition. So the Bedouin threw himself in the prince's way, and addressed him in the usual style of praise and prayers for his posterity ; and the Caliph, looking towards him, said, " Whence dost thou come, O Arab of the plains ?"

The poor man told him the name of his desert, and how all his people were suffering under the miseries of famine ; and the Prince, in return, asked him where he was going. The inhabitant of the desert replied, " I was seeking thy royal court, Commander of the Faithful, and have not come empty-handed : for I have brought thee, as an offering, such a present as no man's wishes have ever reached to, nor the eyes of any human being have yet been blessed with." The Caliph, in astonishment, desired immediately to see this great rarity ; and the ignorant Arab, in great exultation, held up his old leathern bottle, and said, " Here is the water of Paradise, which no man in this world has ever before seen or tasted."

The Caliph ordered his cup-bearer to pour out some of it ; when he found it to be dirty,

stinking water, which had been spoilt by the smell and filth of the bag, of which, however, he tasted a little, and, by his natural acuteness, saw into the whole matter. Yet such was his delicacy of feeling, that he betrayed no dislike, and took care that the poor man's mistake should not be exposed; he thanked the Arab for so rare and delicious a draught; and strictly charged his cup-bearer to take the greatest care of what was left. And having learnt the object of the poor fellow's journey, he gave him more than enough to relieve the wants of his tribe, and was very earnest with him that he should that moment retrace his steps to the desert.

As soon as the Arab was gone, one of the courtiers expressed his surprise that the Caliph had not allowed any one else to taste the water, and that he had been so peremptory in sending the man back. The Prince then explained how the poor fellow had been led into the error, and added, "Now if I had let any of you taste this water, you would have shown your disgust, and scolded him; and if I had allowed him to proceed, he would have seen the Tigris, and the

taste of that pure stream would have shown him his error, and put him to confusion; and I should have felt the shame of abashing a man who had sought me in the confidence of hope."

FIRMNESS.

As the Sultan Mahmùd was passing over the plain of Ghaznî, he saw a Porter with an immense stone upon his back, which he was carrying to some work that the prince was raising; and the man seemed to be painfully oppressed by the weight of his burden. When the Sultan saw the poor man's sufferings, his compassion, for which he was remarkable, was excited, and he called out to him to put the stone down. The Porter instantly threw down the stone, which lay for a long time in the middle of the plain: and the horses, as they went by, used to shy at it, and plunge, and put their riders in danger.

At length, some of the courtiers told the King what a serious inconvenience it was to

the public, and that the stone was so heavy that no one could move it but the Porter who had left it there ; and they therefore hoped his majesty would be pleased to order the man to take it away. The King replied, " It has once passed my lips, that it should be laid down ; and if I now bid him to take it up again, the people will suspect me of a want of firmness. No : there it is, and there let it lie."

And the report is, that the stone was left there all the rest of his days, and that after his death, too, none of his descendants, out of reverence for his orders, would ever allow it to be removed.

This story has not been selected for the sake of the moral example which it offers, for that is by no means to be followed ; but it is chosen, because it illustrates the old law of the Medes and Persians, that the King could not change a decree that he had once made ; for though the law was no longer in force, we here find the feeling upheld, as a becoming quality in kings.

FORGIVENESS.

It is recorded of Màmùm, that he used to say, "If men knew how great a delight I feel in forgiving, and how pleasant I find it to overlook faults, offenders would be the only offerings that they would bring to my court."

A KING got the victory over one who had long been his enemy, and ordered him forthwith to the place of execution. But before he gave the signal of his death, he said to him, "And how do you find yourself now?" The man replied, "God loves mercy, and you love victory: He has given you that which you love; it now behoves you to follow that which He loves."

The King felt the force of his words, and released him.

A PERSON, on whom a King had bestowed great favour, betrayed him, and had justly incurred his anger. He consulted one of the other cour-

tiers about what he should do; who said, "If I were the King, I should put such an ungrateful fellow to death." To which the Prince replied, "But as you are not the King, the safest way perhaps will be, to do just the contrary. So I shall forgive him. For the more base his treachery, the more generous my pardon."

ONE of the public officers had been so nefarious in the discharge of his duty, that the King removed him from his post, and ordered him to be brought to court in chains. When the King had poured forth his anger against him, and the executioners were called in, the poor culprit said, "When they shall call thee to account, O King, in the day of judgment, for the discharge of thy duties, what wilt thou ask for?" "For the mercy of God," said the King. "Then show now, on earth, that thou lovest mercy; for Divine mercy follows royal mercy." So the King forgave him.



LIBERALITY.

HATIM TAI has, for ages past, been renowned as a matchless example of liberality; and while he was alive, his fame was spread abroad, and excited the jealousy of all the sovereigns of the earth.

Many of them were excited by envy to put his generosity to the severest trial, hoping that he would fail, and thus cease to be more admired than themselves.

The King of Syria sent a messenger to him, requesting to be furnished with a hundred

camels of a red colour, with black eyes and high humps, which are of so rare a kind, that they are scarce even in Arabia, and when found, fetch a very high price. Hatim received the envoy with the utmost respect, feasted him sumptuously; and then requested to know the object of his visit. As soon as he heard the demand, he said, "Most willingly: but a little delay, I fear, may occur." So he sent his messengers to all the tribes of Arabia, to proclaim that if any man would bring him a camel of this description, he would buy it at any price: and promised to pay the amount in a given time. And thus did Hatim incur an immense debt, to comply with the king's unreasonable demand.

When the envoy returned, and reported to his master what had passed, the King of Syria felt ashamed of his behaviour. He therefore ordered the same camels to be loaded with the most valuable merchandize, and sent them all back, by the same messenger, as a present to Hatim. The generous Arab, after returning due thanks, sent for all the men who had lent him the camels, and desired every man to take

back his own, with the burden-unpacked, just as it came from Syria.

The next person who tried him was the Emperor of Constantinople, and on a point which comes home to an Arab. Hatim had a horse, which was as famous for his good qualities, as the Prince was for his generosity; and which he was known to value above all things. So the Emperor sent a messenger, with costly presents, to ask for this horse.

The envoy reached Hatim when he was at a distance from home, and in such tempestuous weather, that they could neither go back, nor obtain suitable provision for the reception of such a guest. Hatim, however, received him with his usual courtesy, gave up everything for his accommodation; and rather than offer any excuse for want of hospitality, ordered his favourite horse to be killed for his supper.

Nothing passed that night; but next morning the envoy produced his rich presents, and delivered the message with which he was charged. Hatim was so much confused at hearing it, that the envoy perceived it, and

said, "If you feel the least reluctance in complying with my master's request, say so without hesitation; for he would be grieved to cause you the least uneasiness." Hatim, with some warmth, replied, "Do not mistake me so much; it is not for the horse that I feel regret. If I had a thousand such horses, and any inferior person had asked for them, I should have given them to him; how much more, then, when a Prince of such illustrious rank does me the honour to send a person of your dignity to ask for one horse only! I am only distressed that you did not at first give me your message."

He then told him the fate of the horse, and forcing upon him several others of the highest blood in Arabia, begged him to present them, with a suitable apology, to his master. And the Emperor, when he heard the story, freely confessed that Hatim deserved his reputation for generosity.

THE King of Yemen held a royal feast, to which strangers flocked from all quarters; and

at which all that was most precious in the East was lavished in abundance. At one moment, the King poured forth streams of gold, like the mid-day sun; at another, he scattered pearls like drops from the vernal cloud. All were profuse in praise of his munificence, except a traveller of mean appearance, who declared that he was not equal to Hatim Tai in generosity.

The King was so offended at these words, that he broke up the banquet, and retired in anger to his chamber, where he sat a long time, thinking how he could be revenged on a person who thus stood in the way of his claim to admiration. At length he resolved upon Hatim's death; and for this purpose engaged a man of great artifice and boldness, to introduce himself into the tribe of Tai, and watch a favourable opportunity of murdering the chieftain.

The assassin proceeded on his wicked journey, and after travelling some days, fell in with a youth of graceful mien and courteous manners: who, after the usual salutation, urged him to turn in, and share his evening meal. The man consented, and was charmed with the assiduous

hospitality and cheerful conversation of his host, who was equally delighted with the wit and talents of his guest; and to their mutual surprise, the grey dawn found them still at table.

The traveller arose in haste to depart, and the youth seized him by the hand and entreated him to stay. "I dare not linger; I have a business on hand which admits of no delay." "I must know it, then," said the youth; "I may be of use to you in these deserts; and if there be danger, let me share it with you." Won upon by the earnestness of the youth, the man, after exacting a promise of secrecy, revealed the purpose of his journey, and told him how large a reward the King had engaged to give him for the head of Hatim; and then added, "So now, if you will lead me to the tribe of Tai, and show me the person of their prince, you will greatly oblige me." The youth, bowing himself down, replied, "Behold! your wish is accomplished; Hatim is in your hands: strike off my head, and claim the reward."

The assassin, overcome by such an instance of generosity, fell at the Prince's feet, and im-

plored his forgiveness; and Hatim, having furnished him with horses and provisions for the journey, sent him back to Yemen.

When the King heard the story, he acknowledged that Hatim had a better right than himself to be called "the generous."

SINCERITY.

ONE of the sovereigns of Khorasan had ordered a riotous person to be taken to the usual place of punishment, where they began to whip him; and in the midst of it, the fellow began to revile the Prince in the coarsest language. Upon which the Prince commanded them to stay their hands, and to release him.

One of the courtiers expressed surprise at this, and ventured to ask his reason for pardoning and releasing the insolent wretch at the very moment when his punishment deserved to be increased. The Prince replied, "I was chastising the man in the fulfilment of the duty that I owe to God; but when he reviled me, my

temper was disturbed, and my heart began to feel revengeful: and I was afraid that I might allow private resentment to interfere with public duty, which would be contrary to the great principle of sincerity; for be assured, that the man who allows a selfish feeling to mingle with his motives, will lose all the merit of the action, and forfeit the reward of duty."

HUMILITY.

A PERSON of great sanctity once paid a visit to the Caliph Haroun. The Caliph rose to receive him, and with every mark of reverence conducted him to his own seat. And when he took leave, the Caliph rose again, and accompanied him a little way. Some of the nobles afterwards observed that such condescension would lessen his dignity, and diminish the awe that belongs to a prince. The Caliph replied, "The dignity that is lessened by humility is not worth maintaining; and the awe that is diminished by paying reverence to piety, should be got rid of as soon as possible."



INTEGRITY.

WHEN Naushirván was a young man, he was idle and dissipated, and showed no promise of those virtues for which he afterwards became so celebrated; and he lived at that time near the house of a person who was renowned all over the city for his liberal and hospitable entertainment of all who came to him.

The Prince, for a frolic, disguised himself as a merchant, and had a mind to try whether the man deserved the report that was made of his liberality. So he went at the usual hour, and

was courteously received and conducted to the garden; where the dinner was laid out in a bower of vines, covered with clusters of rich grapes.

After the entertainment, at which the host amply sustained his reputation, the Prince, still feigning himself to be a merchant, thanked him for his hospitality; and begged to know what he could do to show his grateful sense of it.

The host said he should take it as a great favour, if his guest could procure him some grapes, which he was very fond of. The Prince could not conceal his surprise at such a request from a man of his known liberality, while his garden was full of ripe grapes, and which, indeed, was the only thing that he had not freely offered to his company.

Upon which the man excused himself by saying: "Our King is a severe man, and claims a portion of all the fruit that is grown; his officers have not yet been to take an account of my crop, and if I should pick any, I should defraud him of a part of his tithe."

And it is said, this strong instance of in-

tegrity, on the part of the man, first awakened Prince Naushirván to that strict sense of justice for which he became so conspicuous.

THE FULFILMENT OF PROMISES.

A CERTAIN King once found himself in such imminent danger, that he made a vow, that if God would bring him safe out of his difficulties, he would distribute all the money in his treasury among the poor.

When his wishes were accomplished, he set about fulfilling his vow; and for this purpose ordered the treasurer to bring him an account of what was in his hands. As soon as the ministers learnt his intention, they were strangely alarmed about paying the troops, and providing for the other public expenses; the courtiers were in still greater fear for their pensions, and the whole palace was thrown into consternation at the idea of flinging away so much money upon beggars. And as the King, in telling them his

vow, had said that he had promised to distribute his money among *those who had a claim to relief*, the ministers took advantage of the expression, and, at their suggestion, the chief lawyers gave it as their opinion, that the troops and the public servants certainly came within that description.

The King was much embarrassed by the clamour of the courtiers, and the arguments of the lawyers, and knew not what to do. In the midst of his perplexity, a Fool happened to pass by; so the King called him in, and, after fully stating the case, desired to know what he thought of it. The Fool quickly replied, "When you made the vow, were the poor or the troops in your mind?" "I thought of nothing but the poor," said the King. Upon which the Fool replied, "Then if you mean to keep your vow, you must give the money to those whom you meant when you made it."

The King felt satisfied that the Fool was right; and followed his advice. He afterwards took measures towards defraying the necessary public expenses.

WHEN Yacoub Laith besieged Naishápín, most of the nobles and officers of the enemy sent him secret letters and promises of allegiance. But there was one called Táhir, who held no communication with him, nor ever went to congratulate him upon taking the city. Yacoub therefore sent for him, and asked him why he had not written to him, nor come to salute him after his victory. Táhir respectfully answered, "I owed you no fidelity which should call forth professions of attachment. I had received no injury from my former master, that I should either desert or betray him; and while I grieved for his downfall, I could not rejoice in your victory."

Yacoub was so pleased with Táhir's adherence to his first vows of allegiance, that he raised him to the highest office; and always treated him with confidence and esteem.

A SENSE OF DUTY.

THERE was a good old man in the city of Bagdad, who was very zealous in the defence of his religion ; he never met with an infidel, but he boldly withstood him, and he never saw any one do wrong without rebuking him ; by which he often brought himself into trouble. But the people had a great respect for his piety and sincerity, and he did a great deal of good among them.

As he went one day to the Tigris, to perform his ablutions, he saw a boat full of jars, upon each of which was written "Superb." The old man sat wondering what that could mean. At last he said to the boatman, "Pray, what have you got in those jars ? I have lived among the merchants, but I never heard them talk of such things as *Superbs*." "What's that to you ?" said the boatman ; "wash your face, and do not meddle in other men's affairs." "Well, I only asked for information, as I never knew anything called by such an odd name. I meant no

offence." The boatman, a little softened by his mildness, then told him that it was wine for the private use of the Caliph, who at that time happened to be a cruel, profligate man, who set all the laws of his religion at nought, when they thwarted his inclination. The zeal of the good old Mussulman was set in a blaze on hearing that such an abomination was sanctioned by the Commander of the Faithful. "Give me that club," said he, pointing to a pole in the boat. "Give it him; it will help him to go about his business," said the boatman to his boy.

As soon as the old man got hold of the pole, he jumped into the boat, and laid lustily about him, till there was not a whole jar left, and all the wine was spilt. The boatman was so appalled at his fury, that he offered no resistance, and sat screaming out murder; till at last the police came up, and took the old man while he was yet venting his rage upon the fragments.

The tumult that was excited in the city, when the people saw the good old man carried through the streets like a culprit, brought the facts to the ears of the Caliph, who immediately

put on a scarlet robe, and took his seat on an iron chair, with an iron mace in his hand ; and, as this was his custom whenever he was in a cruel temper, they all gave up the poor old man for lost.

As soon as he appeared, the Caliph, in a violent rage, asked him how he dared destroy his property ? To which the old man boldly replied, " It was no man's property : and in destroying it, I have done a great favour to you and all the people." The Caliph asked him what he meant by that ? He answered, " I have deterred you from a sin, and saved the people from an evil example."

The Caliph, though by no means satisfied with this reasoning, nor reconciled to the loss of his wine, was so abashed at the rebuke, that he was constrained to forego his revenge.



THE Arabs have so great a regard for the rights of hospitality, that if any one, even an animal, takes shelter under the shade of their tents, they think it base to give him up. And it is astonishing what wealth has been spent, and what blood has been shed among them, in maintaining this principle of duty.

Bahram Gor, when a young man, passed much of his time in Arabia, and was fond of hunting over those extensive deserts. As he was out one day, he fell in with a doe so remarkably swift, that though mounted on one of the finest horses, he could never get within

shot of her. When the chase had now lasted some hours, the poor creature, faint with heat, fled, in despair, to an encampment of Arabs, and took refuge in one of the tents. Bahram followed at full speed, and pulling up at the door of the tent, called to the man to give up the deer. "The arrow that is now set in your bow, must first go through my heart," said the man, "and even then, you will not escape the vengeance of my people. Take my horse, if you will, which stands at the door; but not a hair of this doe shall you touch. When did an Arab ever betray his guest?"

Bahram, recollecting the habits of the people, turned away without saying another word: and when he afterwards succeeded to the throne of Persia, he took care that the hospitable Arab should be placed in a wealthy and honourable condition.

THE Governor of a province had entrusted a large sum of money to the care of a man, who always found some pretence or other for not

restoring it. The Governor at last gave him in charge to an officer, with directions to extort the money from him, and the officer took him and treated him with great cruelty.

The man, who was unable to pay the money, bore it some time, and at length entreated the officer to take him to the Governor, as he had something of importance to tell him. The officer, feeling pity for him, consented; and it so happened that they got to the Governor's just as dinner was served. The officer took a seat at the table, and made his prisoner sit down by him. Nothing particular occurred, till, towards the end of dinner, the Governor looking up, saw who they were, and said, "Since he has sat at my board, and eaten of my bread, it would be a violation of decency to treat him with further harshness. I forgive him the debt."

JUSTICE.

THERE is a story preserved of a king, in former times, who felt an ardent desire to go on a pilgrimage to the temple of Mecca; a duty which every good Mohammedan is required to perform when he has it in his power. His courtiers, however, were very averse to the design. They stated to him that the duty was enjoined in their law upon the express condition that the journey was free from danger; and that it never could be safe for him: for if he moved with a suitable retinue of guards, it would not be possible to take food enough for them in the desert; and if he took but few attendants, he might fall into the hands of his enemies, or be overtaken by robbers. And, after all, they said, they could not answer for the calamities which his absence might bring upon the people: and for which he could never make them amends.

The King felt the force of their objections; but still wishing to obtain the reward that is promised to those who fulfil this duty, desired

them to consider by what means he could obtain this object. They told him that there was a Hermit not far off, who had sixty times been across the desert to worship at the temple, and who now passed his days in seclusion ; and he, perhaps, might be willing to sell his Majesty the merit of one of his pilgrimages.

The King accordingly set out, and presenting himself, in great humility, at the door of the hermitage, explained his wishes. "I will sell you," said the Hermit, "the merit of all sixty." The King, much pleased at his ready compliance, begged to know what price he set upon each. "Why I value each step that I took in each pilgrimage, at the price of the whole world, and all that is in it." The King started back at these terms, and said, "I have not been avaricious: it is but little that I possess of this world or its riches: I could not pay the price of one step. How am I to purchase the sixty pilgrimages?" To which the Hermit replied, "I would not bear the burden of your kingdom and your wealth. You may keep them; and still pay me the full price that I ask." After

some further conversation, and a promise from the King that he would accept the terms, the pious man said, "Give me only the merit of one hour that you shall patiently pass in listening to the complaints of the needy and the oppressed, or in the impartial administration of justice, and I will cheerfully resign to you the value of my sixty weary pilgrimages; for, believe me, I shall then be a gainer in the life to come."

ONE of the kings of Persia, whose name is celebrated in history, while hunting on the bank of a river, lay down to repose himself in a meadow. While he slept, a slave who was the chief groom of the chamber, strayed into a neighbouring village, where he found a cow grazing by the waterside; so, ordering some of the others to kill her, they broiled the choicest bits, and made a hearty meal.

Now the cow happened to be the whole of the wealth of a poor widow, who maintained herself and four young children by the sale of the milk. When she learnt her loss, she flew in, all the

boldness of a wretched mother to the foot of the bridge, where the King must pass on his return to the palace ; and as soon as the royal procession came up, she darted suddenly forward, and seized the reins of the King's horse. The same slave who had wronged her, lifted up his whip to repel such insolence ; " Hold," said the King ; " she is some injured and desolate creature ; I must know her grievances, and of whom she complains." Then turning to the poor woman, he bade her be of good cheer, and tell him all that she had on her mind. The agitated woman, with the force and eloquence of maternal anxiety, thus began : " Son of Ulup Arslaux, do me justice here, at the foot of this bridge ; or by the glory of the only One Supreme, I will cling to thee on the Bridge of Judgment, till I obtain justice against thee ; think well, and choose which bridge thou wilt go over." And with these words she let go the reins and stood with folded hands before him.

The monarch, startled at this solemn appeal, dismounted, and said, " O mother, I dare not meet thee on that bridge ; say on, and I will do thee ample justice here."

The poor widow then told her story ; and the King, after severely punishing his servant, took care that she should pass the rest of her days in ease and plenty.

IN the days of the Caliph Màmùn, some one, who for a criminal act had forfeited his life, fled from the hands of justice ; so they took the man's brother, and carried him before the Caliph, who ordered, that he should either produce the offender, or suffer in his stead. Upon this, the man said, " If one of your officers had ordered me to be put to death, and you should command him to spare my life, would he obey you, or not ? " The Caliph, without hesitation, replied, " Certainly ; he would instantly release you. " " Then," said the man, " I have an order for you from the King whose servant you are, to release me. " " Let us see your credentials," said the Prince. Upon this the man produced a passage from the Koran, forbidding that one man should be punished for the offences of another. The Caliph was exceedingly affected at this rebuke ;

As Kobád was out hunting one day, he got separated from his attendants; and, the weather being hot, he was parched with thirst, and went wandering about in search of a spring, and the shade of a tree. At length he espied a black object in the desert, and galloping up to it, found a tattered tent, with an old woman and her daughter sitting beneath. As soon as the King came up, the old woman arose, and holding the reins of his horse, assisted him to alight; and with great alacrity produced the best food that she had at hand. Hunger gave a relish to the hard fare; and when the King had finished his scanty meal he fell asleep, and slept so soundly, that he did not wake till it was too late to find his way back. So he made up his mind to pass the night there.

When evening prayers were over, the girl went to milk her cow, which had just come home; and the King was astonished to find that one could yield so much. So he began to turn in his mind, that there was a large tribe of these wanderers in the wild parts of the country who paid no rent nor tribute; and that if all their cows gave as much milk, they must be very rich;

and that it would be no great hardship on them to take the milk of one day out of the seven ; while a great increase would be made to his revenue. The thought pleased him so much that he resolved to put the plan in execution ; and fell asleep, with his head full of schemes for spending his new wealth.

At dawn, when the girl went out to milk the cow, there was scarcely any ; and she came running back, in great alarm, to tell her mother that the cow had gone dry in the night. The old woman, with great calmness, replied, “ Depend upon it, then, the King has formed some scheme of injustice.” “ What makes you think that ? ” said the disguised monarch. “ Because, sir, it is an old saying, that whenever the King sets his mind upon violence, God withdraws his blessings from the land.”

The King, alarmed at these words, renounced his design, and desired the daughter might go once more, and try what the cow would give. The girl did so ; and now came back, smiling, with the usual supply of milk. And the King returned to his palace, satisfied that justice and

moderate taxation were the best means of increasing the wealth of his people, and adding to his own riches.

A SIMILAR story is told of Bahram Gor, who stopped one sultry day at the gate of a garden, and begged for a cup of pomegranate juice : with which the old gardener instantly supplied him, but without knowing the rank of his guest.

“And how much,” said the King, “do you get by your garden every year?” “Three hundred dinars, sir,” said the old man. “And what may you pay to the exchequer?” “Nothing from the branches ; but the King takes his tithe on the land in cultivation.”

This set the King upon considering that there was an infinite number of such gardens in the kingdom ; and that if he took a tithe of their produce, he should raise a large sum annually, without any great pressure upon the people. So having resolved upon doing so, he begged another draught ; but this time the gardener was a long time ; and when he returned, with a cup half full, he apologized by saying, “that

the Sovereign must certainly be meditating some violent measure: for that now he had not got so much juice out of ten pomegranates, as he did before from one."

The King immediately renounced his design; desired the old gardener to fetch him another cup; found the fruit was now as productive as ever; and from that day forward took more pains about the prosperity of the people, than to enrich himself.

SULTAN MAHMUD, one day, gave an order to his ministers, to go and bring him the greatest fool in his dominions. They were puzzled, and alarmed at so strange an order; for they knew that their safety depended upon their punctual obedience to all his commands. They lost no time, therefore, in sending messengers into every province of the kingdom: and were soon furnished by the different governors with abundant examples of every species of folly; but they found it difficult, among so many, to pick out the greatest fool. At length one of them found

a man in his own garden, sitting upon the end of a branch which he was sawing off; and they agreed that this was the man who would best answer the King's expectations. They led him, therefore, to the royal presence, and described the situation in which he had been found. "And yet there is a greater fool among us," said the King, casting a glance at the minister of finance. The courtiers, with great deference, acknowledged the superior wisdom of the King, and entreated his Majesty to be more explicit. Upon which the King said, "I mean the man who would throw the country into confusion, and bring the King into contempt, by destroying the best institutions of the land, which are to the nation what the branches are to the tree."

OF all the buildings of the world, nothing was ever so splendid as the hall of Naushirván. And yet it was not for the height of the roof, the painted walls, or handsome throne, that it is talked of. Any man may raise a pile of stone,

and put up costly gates. The peculiar ornament of that palace, for which it is still admired, was a dirty old hut that stood at one corner, and from which the smoke blew in and blackened the walls. And the history of it was this :—

After the King had begun to build, he found this hut would interfere with his plan; so he sent to the old woman to whom it belonged, and offered her any price for it, or to build her another. She sent back this message : “ I was born in this hut, and am grown old in it; and here I will die. I am content to leave all the world to you; cannot you leave me this poor hut ?”

So the King said no more about it. But when the palace was finished, and the smoke blew into the hall, he sent to complain of the inconvenience; and asked her why she made a fire under his windows. She coolly replied that she was dressing her food. The King said no more at the time, but when supper was served, he sent her a fowl and some bread, and said she should have it every night. The old woman sent it back, saying, “ There are plenty of starving creatures who are more in want of it; God has

fed me seventy years on barley-meal ; I have no need of the King's dainties."

Ever after this, the King felt proud of such a neighbour ; and took more pleasure in showing his blackened walls, than any of the costly ornaments of the palace.

But the servants of the court were not so patient with her. She had a lean cow, which she used to drive night and morning in the same path that she had used from her childhood, and which lay across the rich carpets that were spread before the hall ; at which the attendants would call out, shame upon her, for thus dishonouring the King, and disgracing his dignity. To which she used always to give this answer, " Nothing can do dishonour to the King like his own want of justice ; and nothing reflects disgrace upon his dignity, more than his own want of understanding. This palace that you are so proud of, will go to ruin ; and would soon be forgotten, but for the history of my old hut, which will make it talked of in future ages."

T R U T H.

HAIJAJ had ordered some prisoners for execution. One of them called out, that he had a claim upon him, and deserved pardon. The Prince desired to hear the claim; and the man pleaded that he had once defended Hajjaj against some one who was speaking evil against him. "Where is your proof of this?" said the tyrant. The man pointed to another prisoner, who he said was present, and heard what passed: and the other, when called upon, bore witness to the truth of the statement. The Prince exclaimed, "And how came you to stand by, and not say a word in my favour, when you heard me so grossly abused?" The man boldly answered, "Because I knew no reason why I should take your part."

Hajjaj ordered them both to be set free; the one for the obligation he felt under to him, and the other for telling the truth.



SECRECY.

ALEXANDER once told an important secret to one of his attendants, with strict charge not to talk of it: but in a little time the secret got abroad. Alexander was greatly offended, and consulted one of the sages of Greece how he should punish the man who had betrayed him. The sage replied, "Do nothing to him. It is you that have betrayed your own secret. If you could not keep it yourself, no wonder it was too much for another."

A MAN of rank once asked a pious man, what he thought of a certain person, (who was austere and punctilious in the ceremonies of his religion, for that some entertained suspicions of his sincerity.) He replied, "I see no fault in his outward behaviour, and I know not the hidden things of his heart."

SAADEE relates, that he saw a wild Arab sitting among the jewellers at Bassorah, and telling them this story :—

"I was once so worn out with the journey, that I could not keep up with the caravan, and was left behind in the desert, without a drop of water or a bit of bread. In the midst of my misery, I found a bag ; and I never shall forget my joy when I thought it was parched corn, nor my vexation when I found it was pearls."

To the thirsty traveller the shell is as good as the pearl ; where no food is to be bought, a tile is of as much value as gold.

FORBEARANCE.

(A PERSON of authority has related the following anecdote of the Caliph Màmùn. He had a superb ruby, four inches long, and an inch wide, free from flaw, and of the most splendid colour. He sent for a goldsmith, and ordered it to be set in a ring: and next day sent a servant to know if it was done. When the man appeared, he was almost fainting, and trembled like a willow; and upon the Prince's asking the cause of his alarm, he piteously called out for mercy; which being granted, he showed the ruby broken into four pieces, and was unable to utter a word. The Caliph merely smiled, and said, "Then make me four rings; you are not to blame for an accident."

IT is related that the sweetson of the prophetic stem, Hosein, the son of Ali, was sitting at table one day with some guest of the most illustrious rank. A servant, who was coming in with a

basin of soup, felt suddenly confused ; his foot caught in the edge of the carpet, the basin fell out of his hand, and the hot soup was poured into the Prince's face ! The Prince cast a look upon him of gentle chiding, rather than of harsh rebuke ; and the servant replied, in the words of the Koran, "And those who subdue their wrath." The Commander of the Faithful answered, "I have conquered my anger." The man continued the quotation, saying, "And those who forgive mankind." The Prince rejoined, "I have pardoned thee." The man thus encouraged, completed the passage, and said, "And God loveth the liberal." And the Prince replied, "I now release thee from bondage, and engage to provide for thy maintenance."

ANDSHIR BABAK saw his son come to court one day in a most superb and costly dress, and said to him, "My son, it is quite right that Princes should be distinguished by a becoming splendour of dress: and I wish to see you in

such apparel as no other man can show; but here you are in clothes which any men may find."

The Prince, who had already received the compliments of the court upon the fashion and the richness of his attire, was rather confused at his father's observations, and begged to know what materials he would prefer. The King then said, "The cloth that I recommend, has good temper for its warp, and gentleness for the woof: it will never wear out, nor lose its shape; and the longer it is worn, the more beautiful it looks."

THE following story is told as a remarkable instance of good temper in a King. He sent for his cook one day, and ordered a dish that he was fond of, and told the man to take particular care about it. When he came to table, he found a fly in the first mouthful; he tried a second and a third; and still there was a fly; upon which he sent away the dish, and dined off something else. Next day he sent for the cook, and said, "It was excellent; I should like it again to-day; but don't let there be quite so many flies."

SAADEE says of himself, that in all his vicissitudes he never complained of his fortune but once; and that was when he was barefoot, and could not afford to buy a pair of shoes. In this forlorn state, he went into the great mosque of Kufah, and there he saw a man who had no feet: upon which he fell down, and thanked God; and came out, content to go barefoot.

SAADEE knew a rich merchant, who had a hundred and fifty camels for carrying his goods, and forty slaves and attendants.

As they were once on a journey together, the merchant invited him to his chamber, and kept him up all night, while he talked a heap of nonsense about his own schemes,—such as “I have got a large warehouse in Turkistán, and a great sum that is laid out for me in India: here are the deeds of a certain estate; and such a man is security to me in such an affair.” One moment he said he should like to go to Alexandria, because the climate was so good; but in a minute he gave up the idea, because the Mediterranean was boisterous: then he changed his

mind again, and said he would only make one more journey, and, after that, pass the rest of his days in repose.

Saadee asked him the object of that journey; and he said, "I shall carry the sulphur of Persia to China; for I am told that it fetches a high price there; then I shall take China cups and bowls to Constantinople, and go with the brocades of that city to India; from thence I shall bring their fine steel to Aleppo, and take the glass of Aleppo to Yemen; and returning with the woollens of Yemen to Persia, I mean to give up trade."

Thus he went on with his vain and tiresome projects, till, being too tired to talk any more, he begged to know something of what Saadee had heard or observed in the course of his travels. The great moralist of Persia replied in a few verses to this effect:—

"Hast thou never heard what the master of the caravan said, when he fell from his horse and expired in the Desert? 'There are but two things which can fill the narrow eye of a rich man; contentment, or the dust of the grave.'"

FOOLISHNESS.

A MAN had a friend who was made a minister of state, and after that never went to see him. Some one asked why he never went to call upon his friend. "Because I do not want to see him," was the answer. One of the minister's people who was by, asked him what offence he had taken. "No offence at all, Sir; but the only time for friends to visit ministers of state is, when they are turned out."

A MAN who lived by performing feats of strength for the amusement of the public, was once found in a violent rage, and foaming with passion. A sensible person, who was passing by, asked some one in the crowd what was the matter with the man, and was told that one of the bystanders had called him a cheat. Upon which he said, "See the folly of mankind: here is a fellow who has passed his days in trying how many hundred weight he can carry, and has not yet learned to bear a hard word."



STRICT ORDER.

THE Caliph Omar used to relate the following story of himself. In his youth, and before he had adopted the Mohammedan faith, he was going once to Madain, with forty rolls of the finest cloth of Yemen, for at that time he was engaged in commerce. But when he drew near the city, a band of thieves fell upon him, and carried off his goods; and it was with the greatest difficulty that he escaped alive out of their hands.

As'soon as Naushirvân heard what had hap-

pened, he sent a chamberlain to him, who conducted him to a lodging, and begged he would consider it as his home till his property was recovered; and all the time that he remained there, his meals were supplied from the palace; and he met with the greatest courtesy.

At the end of forty days, on coming into his room, he found all his property; with an amputated hand (that of the robber), forty pieces of gold, and a note to this effect: That the utmost vigilance had been used to trace the property, and bring the thief to justice; that the forty pieces of gold were to make amends for his loss of time; and that it was hoped he would not complain, when he got home, of any negligence of duty in the King.

THERE was a certain King, who took great pains to maintain a vigilant and strict police, and was very severe against all idle and disorderly persons.

As he was riding along one day, a low fellow presented a nosegay to him. "Where did you

get those flowers? Did you buy them?" The man reminded the King that there were no flower-shops, and said he had gone into the gardens as he came by, and picked them. The King began to consider that a man who went into his neighbour's garden to pluck flowers without leave, would not stop there; but would next make free with the fruit, and then walk into the house; so he ordered them to seize the fellow and cut off his hand. And it was not till after long and earnest entreaties from his attendants, that the King let him off with the loss of one finger only.

The thieves went one night, and wrote upon the palace wall, "We are the grass: the more you cut us the thicker we shoot." When the King heard this, he told an attendant to write on the other side, "I am the gardener; the thicker you sprout, the closer I cut."

HATIM, so celebrated for his munificence, was asked if he had ever seen or heard of a man of a nobler disposition than himself. He replied, he had once made a great feast, at which he sacrificed no less than forty camels, and entertained a multitude of guests of every rank ; and that when they were departed he rode out into the desert, where he met an old man with a bundle of thorns at his back, whom he stopped, and asked him why he had not been at Hatim's feast. The old man, not knowing who he was, replied, "He who can live by his labour, need not lay himself under an obligation to Hatim." And that he held this old man to be of a more noble and independent spirit than himself.

And another time, when they asked him if he had ever met with one more liberal than himself, he gave the following anecdote :—

"It was just after one of my most splendid entertainments to the chieftains of Arabia, that I found myself benighted in the desert, and sought shelter in the tent of a wild Arab, who had nothing but a few goats for the maintenance of his whole family. He received me with that

cheerful case which bespoke a hearty welcome; and the supper was quickly prepared. One piece of meat was particularly good, and I expressed how much pleasure it gave me; upon this, my host arose, and after some other things had been served, they placed a long dish before me, which was entirely composed of such bits as I had admired.

“In the morning, when I was about to mount my horse, I observed a great quantity of blood had been spilt outside the tent; and upon asking the cause, I found that my kind host had killed every goat that he had, in order to pick out from each the bit that I liked.

“Now I never, at my most costly feasts, had spent more than a small portion only of my wealth; but this man, without any ostentation, gave all that he had in the world to regale a stranger, who might perhaps never have known the extent of his obligation. I have therefore always felt that this poor Arab far surpassed me in liberality.”



WHEN the caravan was leaving Kufah, a bare-footed pilgrim ran on with it, leaping and singing—"No camel do I ride, no burden do I bear, no vassals at my call, but yet the slave of no man."

A kind-hearted man, sitting at his ease on a camel, advised the poor fellow to go back, or he would die of the hardships of the journey; but the pilgrim heeded him not, and went on singing through the desert.

When the caravan reached a certain patch of palm-trees, where they were to halt, death seized

upon the rich man ; and the poor pilgrim sat down at his pillow, and said, " I have survived all my hardships, and thou hast died upon thy camel. And thus have I seen one weeping all night over a friend that was ill ; in the morning he died, and the sick man arose. How often does the noblest steed of Arabia perish, while the lame ass comes safe to the end of the journey !"

LOKMAN was asked where he had acquired such excellent manners. He said, " From the unmannerly ; as I took care to avoid their faults."

And upon another occasion, when they asked him where he had learned so much prudence, he replied, " From the blind ; for they never stop till they know their footing."

THERE was a King who was about to die, and had no heir. So he made his will to this effect : that they should place the crown on the head of the first man who should come in at the gate of the city, on the morning after his death.

Now it happened that the man who first entered the gate that day was a beggar, whose life had been passed in collecting scraps of food, and in stitching old patches together. But the great officers obeyed the will of their late master, and took this man for their king.

Matters went on pleasantly enough for some time; and as long as all was quiet, the Beggar enjoyed his luxury, and behaved with prudence. But ere long he was involved in war abroad, and insurrection at home; some of the provinces revolted, and some were conquered, and he was driven to despair.

It was about this time, that one of his early companions coming by chance to the same city, heard the story of his elevation, and recognised him; he went accordingly to congratulate him upon his change of fortune, and with a secret hope of sharing in his prosperity. When he had ended his compliments, the King said, "Alas! my friend, it is rather a matter of condolence; when we wandered about together, I had no thought but for a mouthful of bread, and now I have the cares of the whole world upon me."



THE KING AND THE BEGGAR.

A MISERABLE Beggar had amassed an enormous sum by his pitiful trade. The King being then at war, and much at a loss, proposed to borrow it of him, and promised to pay him again when he should find himself in a more prosperous condition. The Beggar represented that it would degrade his majesty to pollute his hands with the money of such a mean person, and which had been gathered by a farthing at a time. "Never mind that," said the King; "I have some foreign

hireling troops in my army ; your cash will go to pay these ; base things suit base fellows." Thus the King would not be denied.

WHEN the Lynx was asked why he had attached himself to the Lion, and followed him everywhere, he said, " That I may live upon the refuse of his prey, and be safe, under his protection, from my enemies." Upon which they inquired why he kept at such a distance, and seemed shy of a closer acquaintance ; and he gave this answer, " Because I do not feel quite safe from his violence."

And it has been said, that a Gueber may worship the fire for a hundred years ; but if he fall into it for one moment only it will burn him.

ONE of the King's favourite slaves had run away, and was caught. The minister had a spite against the favourite, for some old affront, and gave orders for his execution, on pretence that the example was necessary.

The Slave called out, loud enough to be heard by the King, "I deserve to die, but I would not that the guilt of my blood should lie upon the head of my gracious master; let him slay me if he will, but let it be in conformity with the law, that he may be found innocent." The King desired to know in what manner his death could take place, so as to satisfy more completely the laws of their religion; and the Slave, encouraged by having thus excited the King's attention, went on to say, "Let me loose, that I may run a sword through the minister; and then you will be compelled to put me to death, in retaliation for him; and so you shall punish me, and yet be safe from infringing the law."

The King could not suppress a smile, while he turned to the minister, and desired his advice in this matter; and the minister, without hesitation, replied, "Let him go, let him go, or he will bring ruin upon me; I have deserved this for not following the words of the wise,—‘When you throw at a slinger, take care of your head; when you shoot at a bowman, get out of his reach.’"

A PARTY of robbers had fortified themselves on the summit of a steep mountain, where they defied the efforts of the soldiers, and were become a terror to the whole country. At length they were defeated by a stratagem, and were carried before the king, who ordered every one of them to be instantly put to death.

There happened to be among them a youth of a mild and intelligent countenance, and whose air of innocence excited great interest in the mind of one of the nobles of the court; he therefore entreated the king to pardon the youth, urging that he had, as yet, tasted none of the pleasures of life, and was too young to have imbibed the wicked disposition of the others.

But the king was much displeased at the request, and held it to be impossible to infuse virtuous sentiments into one of base and wicked origin; he thought it his duty, he said, to eradicate the whole tribe; for to put out the fire, and leave the embers burning, or to kill the snake, and bring up the young ones, was contrary to common prudence. And he concluded by saying, "If the clouds were to pour down the

water of life, yet we should never gather fruit from the willow. Have no intercourse with the base, for you cannot get sugar out of rushes."

The nobleman, with great deference, admitted the wisdom of his majesty's remark; but begged leave to observe that it all depended upon the boy's being brought up among the thieves, and that if he received his education in virtuous society, there was no doubt but he would grow up honest and amiable: for the wife of Lot fell into company with the wicked, and the prophetic office was lost to the family.

As many others now joined him in his intercessions, the king was prevailed upon, and said, "I pardon the youth, though I know it to be imprudent. How often have I seen a stream from a small source, which, as it advanced, has carried away the camel and his load!"

The nobleman then placed him under masters and tutors of the greatest skill and learning, spared no expense on his education, and had him brought up in all the habits and accomplishments of the court, till his proficiency became the admiration of all who knew him; and

his patron could no longer refrain from boasting before the king, of the complete success of his experiment. At which the king merely smiled, and said, "After all, the wolf's cub is a wolf, though he may grow up with mankind."

Some time after this, and when he was thought to be steady in the path of virtue, the young man formed an acquaintance with some low vagabonds, and began to take pleasure in their society. At last, forming them into a band, he killed the nobleman and his sons, carried off immense wealth, and took up his abode in the cave of the robbers.

When the king heard of it, he was deeply concerned, and said, "Bad iron never makes a good sword; a churl seldom grows by education into a gentleman; the rain falls rich and sweet in all places; in the garden it produces tulips, and brambles in the desert."



THE KING AND HIS MINISTER.

A MINISTER of State, who was dismissed from office, joined a company of dervises ; in a short time his whole character was changed, and he acquired their calm and peaceful turn of mind.

When the king had laid aside his anger, and repented of his hastiness, he sent to the Minister, and desired him to resume his office ; but he now, grown wise by experience, declined the honour, and said, that he found retirement sweeter than employment. The King was urgent with him to comply, as he was much at a loss to

find some man of solid judgment, to whom he might commit the direction of affairs. The recluse sent back this answer :—"The best proof of solid judgment is, to avoid the danger of such a trust."

THERE was a famous Wrestler, who had a favourite Pupil, and he took the greatest delight in his improvement; he spared no pains in his training and exercise, and taught him three hundred and fifty-nine modes of attack and defence; but there was one, and that the most successful mode of throwing an antagonist, which he kept from him. When the youth thought himself perfect in all the rules of the art, and felt that he was come to his full strength, while he saw that his master was beginning to decline, he boasted before the King, that he could easily throw the old man, if he were not restrained by the reverence that was due to an instructor. The King was very much displeased at this undutiful behaviour to one who stood in the place of a father to him; but,—in the hope that,

he would get punished for his vanity,—allowed him to make the trial.

At the appointed time, the youth rushed on to the attack with the impetuosity of a wild elephant. The old man received him with a calm and steady look, watched the opportunity for trying the feat which the youth had never learnt to ward off, and then lifting him over his head, cast him in contempt upon the ground.

All were gratified with the result, and applauded the old man; but the youth still maintained that he was the best wrestler, and that his master had thrown him by a mode of attack which he had kept secret. “It is true,” said the old man, with some emotion: “I kept it for such a day as this; for I remembered the advice which was once given me,—‘Never give your friend such power, that he can hurt you, if he becomes your enemy.’”

SAADEE tells the following tale. That he was once in a ship with a party of noblemen, when a small boat went down under their prow, and

two brothers fell together into the eddy. One of the nobles offered a hundred dinars to a sailor, if he would jump in and save them; and the man saved one, but the other was lost.

When the sailor came aboard, Saadec said to him, "I suppose life was extinct in the other, that all your attention was turned to this one." The sailor, with a smile, replied, "Partly so; but besides that, this man once took me upon his camel, and gave me water, when I was fainting in the desert, and the other had once given me a flogging, when I was a child."

Upon which he made this observation:—"If it be possible, do not hurt the feelings of any one, for it is a thorny path to do so; relieve, if you can, the cares of others, for you too will meet with cares yourself."



MONEY AND FALSEHOOD.

A TRADESMAN went to an aged person who was renowned for his wisdom, and begged he would give him some rule for his conduct. The sage said, "I must first ask you a question; and **you** must answer me without disguise. Which do you love best, money or falsehood?" "Money, to be sure," said the man. Upon which the sage replied, "Then remember, that what you love must be left behind you; and that what you do not love will follow you."

A SERVANT hastened to carry to Naushirvân, the glad tidings that God had taken off one of his enemies. The king calmly replied, "And have you heard that He will leave me behind? Why should I rejoice in the death of my enemy? My life also will have an end."

THE following story was related by a person of authority and reputation, who was one of the party.

A vessel set sail from Bassorah to Bagdad, with several passengers on board. In the course of the voyage, the sailors, by way of a joke, put a man in irons, as he lay asleep, and he became a subject of diversion to the whole party, till they drew near to the capital. But when the sailors wanted to let him loose, the key was nowhere to be found, and after a long and fruitless search, they were forced to send for a blacksmith to knock off the fetters.

When, however, the blacksmith came, he refused to do what they wanted, till he had the authority of the mayor; for he thought the man might be some criminal whom the officers of

justice had laid hold of, and that his friends wished to favour his escape.

To the mayor they accordingly went, who sent down one of his attendants to see into it. But the officer, when he had heard their story, and had taken the evidence of some of the most respectable among the passengers, shook his head, and with a look of solemnity, said it was much too serious a case for him to decide. So they repaired in a body to the mayor, and carried the poor captive with them.

So strange a procession was sure to attract notice, and a crowd soon collected about them, each curious to know the prisoner's offence, and to catch a sight of him, till at length, one man, springing forward, seized the captive by the throat, and exclaimed, "Here is the villain I have been looking for these two years; ever since he robbed and murdered my poor brother." Nor would he quit his hold till they came before the mayor: and the murder being clearly proved, the man who had been confined in joke only, was given up to death, as a punishment for the blood that he had shed.

ONE night the great mosque at Cairo caught fire, and was destroyed. The Mohammedans suspected that the Christians had done it; and went next night, in revenge, and set fire to their houses. The governor, having apprehended a large body of those who had been most active in this outrage, resolved to make a serious example of them: he therefore took as many tickets as there were culprits; upon some he wrote *Death*; on others, *Loss of a hand*; and on others, *Flogging*; and then distributed the tickets among them; and every man received the punishment which was written upon the ticket that fell to his lot. At length they came to a youth whose sentence was *Death!* which they were about to execute, when he burst into tears, and said, "I am not afraid to die; but I have a dear mother, whose sole dependence is on my labour; and when I am dead, she will be destitute." The man who stood next to him, and whose doom was a *flogging* only, when he heard these words, was moved with pity, and said, "Then change tickets with me; for I have no mother who will miss me."

The governor happened to hear of this pro-

posals, and was so moved with compassion, that he spared both the prisoners; one of them he spared for the sake of his good parent; and to the other he said, "It is easy to be liberal out of the abundance of our wealth; but he who gives up his life for another, affords the strongest example of sincere generosity."

A WEAVER had placed all his savings in the hands of the village-schoolmaster: and after some time, wanted the money to pay his rent. When he went for it, the Schoolmaster was engaged in teaching his boys, and desired the man to sit down; but lesson after lesson went on, and the old man kept nodding his head at every word; and never once seemed to think of the money.

The weaver getting impatient, and thinking that the whole art of teaching lay in a solemn nod, which he had been imitating for the last hour, seized the first opportunity of another class coming up with their exercises, to say, "I beg your pardon, sir, but if you would have the goodness to fetch the money, I will take your place, and nod my head for you with pleasure."



A RICH man died, and was buried in a manner suitable to his wealth; and his son went to weep at his grave: and the son of a poor but worthy dervise was come to discharge the same pious duty to his father. After some little time, the son of the rich man looked up, and said to the other, “ My father’s tomb is of marble, with an inscription in colours; inlaid with turquoise-stones; and a handsome pavement to it. How different from your father’s! which is nothing but a few bricks heaped together, and a handful of earth scattered over them.” “ It was all I could

do," said the poor man's son; "but my comfort is in the belief that my father is gone to heaven." The proud youth sighed at hearing this; for he could not but fear that *his* father's wealth had been laid up only on earth, and that it would be difficult to get up to heaven under the weight of all his pomp.

The poor man, who has been dragging the weight of his wants, steps lightly to the gate of death: but he who has lived in luxury and repose, when he comes to die, will find it hard to part with his enjoyments. There is a wide difference between the poor captive who has just escaped from bondage, and the rich nobleman who is thrown into prison.

THE Persians have a fable of a camel, who being by nature fitted for the heat of Arabia, suffered severely from the cold winters of Persia. One sharp frosty morning, he poked his nose into a miller's hut, and was comforting himself with the smell of the fire; but the miller, displeased with the intrusion, took up a stick to drive him back. The poor animal pleaded hard for this little

indulgence, which was granted upon condition that he should come no further; but no sooner was the man returned to his work, than he found the beast's head at his elbow. Enraged at this, he insisted upon his taking his long neck out of the way, for there was hardly room in the hut for his son and himself. "But the cold comes in at my ears," said the camel, "and the smell of the fire does me no good: only just my head now, in pity." This too was allowed; and the next moment he thrust in his two fore-legs.

This almost exhausted the miller's patience; but the good man's heart was touched by the doleful entreaties of the shivering beast: and upon a solemn promise that he would intrude no further, he permitted him to remain. But before he could make arrangements for his guest, the awkward beast lay sprawling on the floor of a hut which was too low for him to stand in.

"I told you," said the exasperated miller, "that there was not room enough." "I beg your pardon," said the camel; "I find plenty of room; but if you are at all incommoded, pray do not stay out of compliment to me."

A BLIND man was seen walking carefully along the streets, in a very dark night, with a lamp in one hand, and a pitcher in the other. An impertinent coxcomb accosted him thus: "Why, my old fellow, what's the use of your lamp? A bright day and a dark night are alike to you." The blind man coolly replied, "I do not carry the lamp for my own use; but for the benefit of those blind fools who might run against me with their eyes open, and break my pitcher. It is owing to this, perhaps, that you did not stumble over me and throw me down."

THE following is one of the many instructive anecdotes which Saadee has related of his life:—

"I knew," he says, "the son of a poor pious man, who, by the death of some cousins and uncles, became heir to a large sum of money. He began immediately to indulge in a wild and dissolute course of life, and squandered his money on all sides. In short, I felt it my duty to offer him my advice; and said, 'My son, a man's income is a running stream: and his expenses the rolling mill on the bank: I mean that no

one should keep up a continual expenditure, which is not supplied by a perpetual income. Have you never heard the saying of the sailors, —‘If the rain did not fall in the mountains, the Tigris would be dried up in a twelvemonth?’

“But he was deluded by his follies; and instead of taking my advice, brought up arguments against me, saying, ‘Why should the pleasure that I have, be disturbed by the trouble that may be; or who would choose to taste, to-day, the cares of to-morrow?’

“When I found that my warm and earnest remonstrances had no effect, I left him; and waited for the result: and in a short time I saw him sewing patches together for a covering, and begging a mouthful of bread from door to door! Common humanity would not allow me to reproach him with his folly; but I said to a friend, ‘Fools, in their intoxication, never think of the day of distress. The trees scatter fruit in summer, but are leafless in the winter. The trees may be restored: but poverty, caused by extravagance, probably never will.’”



THE DOUBTS OF UNBELIEF.

THERE was a man who had been brought up as a Mohammedan, and had gone through many strange vicissitudes; but at length, having succeeded to a handsome fortune, he resolved to pass the rest of his life in literary pursuits. It was his misfortune, however, to fall in with certain philosophers, who possessed great skill in subverting established opinions, but had no power to satisfy the doubts which they raised: and being himself quite ignorant of the rules

of sound reasoning, he was unable to detect their fallacies ; and soon got involved in the tormenting intricacies of general unbelief.

In this distressing state of mind, when he began to doubt even if it was true that he doubted, and when the answers of his new friends only made perplexity more perplexing, he resolved upon an expedient which he thought would set his mind at rest. There lived, not far from the city where he dwelt, a hermit, who was held in great veneration for his sanctity and wisdom. So, rising up at midnight, and taking his sword in his hand, he set off for his cell ; and by break of day, he had ascended the mountain, and stood at the door of the hermitage. After the usual salutations, he began, in an abrupt and angry tone, to say, " They tell me you are a holy man. I am tormented with doubts. Give me some proof that there is a God : or with this sword, I'll kill you for an impostor."

The hermit, not at all alarmed, begged he would rest and refresh himself, before they entered upon a subject which would demand

great patience and tranquillity; and while they were at this frugal meal he contrived, by the turn he gave to the conversation, to make his visitor talk of himself and his early life, and recount many of his adventures. At length the hermit said, "Yours appears to have been a life of great danger and vicissitude. Which do you think was the greatest peril that you ever fell into?"

Upon this the man began, with great animation, to tell how he had fallen into the hands of thieves; been left asleep by the caravan in the desert; been taken up for a spy; gone through places which were desolated by famine and the pestilence; but that in all these dangers, he had seen some means of escape, and had never felt despair. "But at last," said he, "as I was sailing in the Mediterranean, we were overtaken by a tempest; the ship went down; and I found myself alone, in the darkness of the night, tossed about on the waves of the stormy ocean; and then, I confess, hope began to give way. But at the moment when my strength was failing, a plank floated to me, which I clung to, and my hopes revived." "That was most fortunate,"

said the hermit: "and so you escaped?" "No, indeed," said he; "for I was so weak, that the next wave washed me off the plank; and I gave up myself for lost." "Well, and what did you then?" "I prayed for help." "To whom did you pray?" "Ah," cried the man, "you are right; there is a God. My own heart tells me so; and no man shall again make me doubt."

ONE of the Caliphs, according to the free and hospitable usages of the country, invited an Arab of the desert to sit down and partake of his meal, and was so much struck with the uncouth manner in which he ate, that he could not keep his eyes off him; but was so rude as to watch every mouthful. At length, seeing a hair in what he was just putting into his mouth, he said, "Stop, there is a hair; take it out." Upon which the child of the desert arose, and in an offended tone replied, "I will eat no more at the table of a man who looks so narrowly into his guest's plate, that he can see a hair in it."

